



PRESS RELEASE

Attorney General Gansler Announces the State of Maryland Has Filed Suit Against the Department of the Army *Department Has Failed to Comply with EPA Cleanup Order at Fort Meade*

BALTIMORE, MD (December 23, 2008) - Attorney General Douglas F. Gansler today announced that the State of Maryland has filed suit in federal court against the Department of the Army (Army) because of its failure to enforce the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) cleanup order for groundwater and soil contamination at Fort Meade. In August of this year, the Attorney General and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) filed a Notice of Intent (NOI), required under the citizen suit provisions of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, of the State's intent to sue if the Department did not comply with an EPA order to commit to specific actions and a timeline for the Fort Meade site cleanup within 90 days. In addition, earlier this month, the Department of Justice ordered the Army to comply with the EPA requirements. Despite these actions, the Army has still not complied with the EPA order.

"The Department of the Army is heading in the right direction by expressing willingness to comply with the EPA order," said Attorney General Gansler. "But the Army must agree to a legally binding commitment that clearly details a timeline for cleanup and immediate action to protect public health."

The NOI filed by the State of Maryland earlier this year noted the presence of contaminants in the soils and groundwater, which exceed EPA's maximum acceptable levels, and may endanger health and the environment. The Army, the EPA and the MDE have been working together for years to investigate and remediate pollution at Fort Meade. These efforts are progressing well at many of the 150 identified sites at Fort Meade. However, in August 2007, the EPA issued a RCRA enforcement order that found that there may be an imminent and substantial endangerment at Fort Meade and ordered that immediate actions be taken to protect public health and the environment. The Army has refused to comply.

A 1990s evaluation at Fort Meade revealed a laundry list of pollution from solvents, pesticides, PCBs, heavy metals, waste fuels and waste oils. Fort Meade was added to the National Priority List (NPL) on July 28, 1998. Further investigation by the EPA detected the presence of contaminants in the groundwater and soil at levels exceeding EPA standards.